

The Law of Christ (Part 2)

Freedom From The Law

Charles Leiter

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Well, let's look at these verses once again. It won't hurt us to become really familiar with this passage in 1 Corinthians 9. Paul says in verse 19, "Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more." He is free, that's the reality. He is free from all men but he willingly makes himself a slave to all that he might win the more. "To the Jews I became as a Jew," - that explains some of the things that happened in the book of Acts - "that I might win Jews. To those who are under the Law as under the Law (though not being myself under the Law) that I might win those who are under the Law. To those who are without law as without law (though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ)" - he doesn't want us to think that he just ran wild when he was with the Gentiles. He was under the law of Christ or inlawed to Christ - "that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it."

If we could, just very briefly, look back at where we've come so far, we have seen three great principles in this first session. One is that we saw something concerning the real purpose of the Law of Moses. It was never given as an alternate method of salvation. Nobody has ever been saved by lawkeeping, and God didn't set it up for that purpose. It was never given to add conditions to the promise made to Abraham. Even in human contracts, you can't do that. And it was never intended as a means of salvation. What was its real purpose? Well, Paul says it was a conductor, a child conductor, a tutor to lead us to Christ; to expose sin; to convict of sin; to give types and shadows and examples of the coming Messiah. You see that, you know, John the baptist, when Jesus came on the scene, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God." This is the real One. All that was foreshadowed in the Law.

So, the real purpose of the Law. Then secondly, we saw that even though many of the promises made in the Old Testament appear to be physical in nature and even have an initial physical fulfillment, yet when we come to the New Testament we find that they had a much deeper significance. It would take quite a bit of time to read even a representative number of passages, but one of them in the Old Testament, God talks about making a covenant with David. And He promised David that he would never lack a man to sit on his throne. He said it is as enduring as the sun, the moon. And that sounds pretty permanent. And the way it's all worded, it sounds like the lineage of David, David's sons, you know, one after another, sitting on his throne.

When you come to the New Testament, let me just read it to you, Luke chapter 1 verse 30, "The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.'" - Now this is an angel speaking. This is the divine interpretation of prophecy. "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." You see, this is the fulfillment of those promises where God told David, "You'll never lack one of your seed; one of

your descendants will reign on the throne forever. Like the stars, like the moon, like the sun forever.” Well, this is it. The Lord Jesus is the fulfillment.

One more, let’s look in Acts chapter 15. This is where James is giving his interpretation of the Gentiles being saved. They meet there at Jerusalem, at this council, and Peter tells about what God had done in the salvation of the Gentiles. And verse 13, “After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, ‘Brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,’” - now we are getting an apostolic interpretation of Old Testament prophecy, and this is what he says, “After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and restore it.” - Now, where is the building at? You know, you start looking around, maybe it’s talking about rebuilding some temple or something. You see, this is what has already happened when Christ came and did the work that He did on the cross. He has rebuilt the tabernacle of David. The Son of David is now reigning, you see. Verse 17, “In order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name,’ says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.”

So James says, Look, this is the fulfillment of Scripture. God has rebuilt the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and now He is bringing in the Gentiles. You see, he takes it in a spiritual way. There are so many things like this. Every valley shall be exalted, every mountain [made low]. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. It’s not talking about a building project over in Palestine. Every mountain shall be made low, the valley shall be exalted. It’s saying every proud person is going to be brought down. Every humble person is going to be lifted up. You see, these are New Testament ways of understanding these Old Testament prophecies.

And then, thirdly, the key to understanding the whole Bible is Christ. We won’t spend more time on that, but you remember in Ephesians 1, he says, “All these took place with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ.” He is the culmination of everything.

Okay, so thus far we’ve seen that Christians (and I’ll just quote what Paul and others say,) Christians are not under the Law. They are free from the Law. They are dead to the Law. They are not under a tutor. Relationship of a lost man to God is one of Law. That is not the way it is with the Christian; he is not under Law anymore. He is dead to Law.

So what does that mean? What does it mean to be dead to the Law? Does it mean that it’s no longer wrong to murder? We know that can’t be. So what does it mean that we have died to the Law? Now I want to go through several things with you very briefly, but I hope we can lay hold of these. First of all, the Christian is dead to the Law and free from the Law - he is free from the curse and condemnation of the Law. Paul says, “As many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse.” If you’re still under the Law, you’re cursed; because if you’re under Law, you’ve broken that Law, and the curse of the Law is resting on you. If you’re still under there, you’re cursed. And the lost man lives under a curse all the time. The wrath of God abides on him.

Now think of this: You may see this fellow out here, everything seems great, his kids are successful, they are not having any big problems, his tomatoes are all growing really great, and all the while, daily, he is living under a curse. He has got the wrath of God abiding on him; he lives under a perpetual curse. That is not true for the Christian.

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us. There is therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. When you first become a Christian, you have this sense, “My sins are gone. And God really does accept me.” But after you’ve been a Christian a while and you start realizing how much sin there is remaining, you start to feel a little bit condemned and defiled. O beloved, that is a lie. If you’re a child of God today, there is not one tiny speck, not one little tiny sin that is remaining on your account. If there was, you’d have to go to hell forever to pay for it. Sin is not imputed. God says, “Their sins and their iniquities, I will remember no more.” That whole category of sins and iniquities, it’s gone. That’s unbelievable! Christians aren’t out on probation. Their sins are no longer remembered. And it’s an amazing thing.

Let me try to get across to you what this is. Maybe I used this when I was here last time, I don’t remember. Talking about justification. But, suppose that I get up this morning and I am a little bit unkind and rude to my wife, and I don’t even really think about it. And I go off to work, and it dawns on me, “That was sin. It wasn’t intentional, but it was sin.” The Bible talks about that, you know. Unintentionally sinning; there is such a thing, a lot of it. And you realize it was sin; and I call my wife up and ask her forgiveness, or when I see her I ask her forgiveness. I ask God to forgive me. Now, I committed a sin, and maybe it was 2 to 3 hours before I even realized, what if I had died in-between there? Would I have gone to heaven or hell? Somebody nodded. if you nod, that doesn’t answer my question. [Laughs]. You’d go to heaven. You realize what that means? That means during the time that you committed that sin, to the time that you realized and confessed it, during that whole time you remained in a justified state. The sin was not imputed to you. It wasn’t on your account.

Now, suppose I knew. Suppose I was unkind to my wife and I knew that I had been unkind to her. It’s a known sin. I mean, I go out the door, I close it a little bit too hard and go off in a huff to work. I know none of you have ever experienced that as a husband. [Audience laughs]. And all morning long it’s bothering you, it’s bothering you, “That was wrong.” You call your wife and ask her forgiveness, you ask God’s forgiveness. Now, that was a known sin. Suppose you had died between the time that you committed it and the time you confessed it, where would you go? I hope you’d say you’d go to heaven. You’d go to heaven. Now think of what that means. God did not impute that sin. “Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more. I blotted them out. They are gone!” That’s incredible.

The Jews look at that, and they say, “Man, if that is true, then let us sin that grace might abound.” And if that’s what is going on in your heart, you see, the Pharisees said, “Well, that would give a license to sin.” You know why? Because Pharisees read their Bibles because they have to; and they go to church because they have to; and they hate being around Christians but they have to. You see the difference? A true child of God, why is it that it bothered me all morning? Because I am a child of God, and I remain a child of God. You say, “Maybe that would give a license to sin.” If you’re a true Christian, you already sin more than you want to. Isn’t that true? Because God says, “Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.” He says, “I’ll write My law on their heart.” He puts something inside of you that wants to be like Him. That is the difference between religion and being a Christian.

Now, the flesh is gravitating all the time towards evil. That is not who you really are, as a child of God. That is part of who you are, but that is not the deepest truth about you. The deepest truth is you want the Lord. He has made you new in the innermost being.

So, the Christian is no longer under condemnation. Now that’s a glorious thing. But secondly, we are free

from the Law as a means of obtaining righteousness and life. You see, the Law said, “The soul that sins will die.” We are free from that. We are no longer under the curse. But the Law also said, “Do this, and you will live. If you want life, you’ve got to obey.” And what happens when you become a Christian is, God gives you the righteousness of Christ; and no longer are you under this thing that is saying, “You perform or you’re not going to have My favor. You’re not going to have life, you’re not going to have blessing unless you perform.” And so, if you do well one day, you think, “Wow, I did good today. I’m God’s son. God’s smile is on me.” And if you don’t do well, you feel like you’re under the curse. That isn’t true. Now, if you do something as a Christian that is displeasing to God, eventually He’ll chasten you. But chastening is a totally different thing. Chastening is suffering inflicted out of love for the good of the one being chastened. In other words, it’s a proof of my sonship! In other words, the Christian abides in a continual state of blessing.

Romans 4:6-8, “David describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works. Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom God will not impute sin.” The Christian, here he is, his tomato plants are all wilted, and he is in prison; and he is a son of God, and he is blessed. All the time he is abiding under perpetual blessing. And if he sins, God loves him so much He’ll give him a spanking and get him straightened out. That’s a glorious thing that God loves me like that. I am no longer under, I’m free from the Law that I’ve got to perform in order to have God’s smile or blessing. In the ultimate sense, His blessing is upon me all the time. Like I said, some of our actions may displease Him, and because He loves me so much, because His smile is upon me in the ultimate sense, He will chasten me in order to make me more like Christ. Now, that’s a totally different situation.

Paul says, “We are free from that. You have the righteousness of Christ.” “He made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

How else is the Christian free from Law? Well, he is free from the Law as an external rule that contradicts his true nature and desires. Now why do I bring this up? Well because, in experience, what the lost man experiences is a constriction. He is constrained and restrained by threats and fear, and he has to do stuff. You know, there is a bumper sticker years ago, “Every thing I like is either illegal, immoral or fattening. [Audience laughs]. Well, the fattening part is one thing, but every thing I like is illegal or immoral? What’s that saying about the heart? You see, the lost man reaches out to steal, and the Law says, “You shall not steal.” He wants to commit adultery, it says, “You shall not commit adultery.” He is hemmed in. He is in bondage to the Law.

Christians are freed from the Law. How does that happen? He puts the Law inside of you so that you want to be the things that the Law requires. How does Paul put it? We probably ought to turn to this; this is so important. Galatians 5:18, “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.” - Now he’s not talking about something that changes from one day to the next. He’s talking about the state of Christians. Christians are those who are Spirit-led, and they not under the Law. “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, (and he goes through all those things and says that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.)” Now verse 22, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; - now look at this phrase - against such things there is no law.” What is he saying? He is saying just walk in the Spirit, just be what God has made you to be, and you will never have a restriction. But you’ll never run into a fence called the Law. You are free.

I wish I could get this across. Think about heaven. Here we are, all in heaven, and you come around the

corner and there is a sign, “You shall not commit adultery. You shall not murder.” You think that’s [possible]? You see, the reality is, there in your heart you don’t want that. You’re totally free. When you get to heaven, the principle that God has put in your heart to love Him has become the only reality in your life. Now, right now we are still battling the flesh, but the principle that’s in us is a love (that’s what He means when He says I’ll put my law inside of you,) a love for righteousness. That is why in 1 Timothy 1:9-10, he says the law was not made for a righteous man. It’s made for all these different..., I better read it. “Realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.”

In other words, the Law is made to restrain the wicked. Christians are in a different category, there is something that has happened inside of them. And they no longer are restrained from evil all the time by outside force. There is something inside of them restraining them.

We are staying over at the Toms; and I don’t see any of those cameras up, you know, trying to make sure we don’t steal anything. [Laughs]. No sign, “Shoplifters will be prosecuted.”

You see, when you are dealing with Christians; we had a book table or book room there, and we’ve got cash in there. And somebody said, when I was talking about this, they said, “Well, you don’t leave a lot of cash in there, do you?” I’m not afraid of Christians stealing that. You see the difference? I mean, there might be some lost kids there that are in deep trouble or need, they might take something out of there. But I am not really trying to, you know, “O I want to make sure I don’t want to let Jen get in there, she might steal something.” [Laughs]. Think of this. We are free! You are free to be who you really are. It’s a glorious thing; you are free from the Law.

How else are we free? Well, we are dead to the Law in the sense that we’ve moved out of the whole realm of demand, and we are in the realm of supply. Now this is a little different. It’s similar, but it’s a little different than what I am talking about here. We’ve moved out of the realm of demand, and we are in the realm of supply, or what the Bible calls grace. Romans 6:14, “Sin shall not have dominion over you, you are not under the Law (you’re not in the realm of demand,) you are under grace.

There’s two realms. There is a realm of Law, and over here is the realm of grace. There’s a realm of the flesh, over here is the realm of the Spirit. There’s a realm of condemnation, over here is the realm of justification. This is the realm of sin; this is the realm of righteousness. We are over here in this realm. And over in this realm, nothing depends ultimately on us. Back in that realm when you were under the Law, it did depend, it was conditioned on you.

Let me give you an example of this. Peter has a problem with self-confidence. It’s a sin problem. He is over here in the realm of grace. The Lord Jesus engineers a situation where Peter would fail, so that that problem with self-confidence can be dealt with; so that he can be strong. And He says, “After this is over, when you turn again, (not if you turn again,) you’ll be able to help these other guys out; you’ll be able to strengthen the brethren.” You see what we are talking about - a realm of supply rather than a realm of demand. You may be shocked in your Christian life, you may have things come out where you’re shocked at how much sin still remains, and how bad you still are in some way. But God isn’t shocked. He knew all about all that before He ever chose you. And He sets to work when

He saves you; He says, “Look, I won’t turn away from you to do you good. Not only that, I’ll put the fear of Me in you so that you won’t turn away from Me.” That’s supply. That’s grace.

And so, He undertakes to do for us everything. He says, “I’ll cleanse you from all your filthiness and all your idols.” There are things in your life after you become a Christian, and God says, “I’m going to work on those. I am not going to leave you alone until I make you like Christ.” It doesn’t depend ultimately on our performance, it depends upon His faithfulness. He says, “I will reign over you, I will be your God. I’ll cleanse you from everything. I am going to get the job done.”

Now if you don’t find that happening in your life, then you need to be afraid. But if you are a child of God, you find that happening. Sometimes you may try to walk beyond what you are and you fall backwards, but lo and behold, there it is, under that reality of God’s grace. I remember one night I was teaching a Bible study to the students, maybe 15 or 20 years ago, and I was coming into our house, and it dawned on me, “Wow, I really am a Christian. I am a Christian.” I mean, God has changed me; I love God. I really do. Isn’t it a glorious thing? We are free! We are free! No longer is it dependent upon you; you’re out of the realm of demand, you’re in the realm of supply. You are free from the Law.

“I will work in you, I’ll work in you,” He says, “I’ll work in you both to WILL and to DO of my good pleasure.” “The fact that you desire to do what is good, I worked it in you.” And then, once you start desiring it, it’s a long way before you actually get there, isn’t it? But He says, “I’ll work in you to DO of my good pleasure too.” Safe in Thy sanctifying grace, Almighty to restore. Borne onward, carried onward—sin and death behind, and love and life before. Oh, let my soul abound in hope, and praise Thee more and more!

Carried forward by grace. What does he say? He says, “The Law entered,” talking about the Law of Moses, Romans 5, “The Law entered that sin might increase.” Not as the Jews thought, that men might save themselves by lawkeeping. No, the Law entered that sin might increase. “But where sin abounded, Grace abounded (it increased) all the more. That as sin has reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life.” We are living in a realm where grace is reigning. Now, in the old realm, sin reigns. That means sin gets on a man’s back, and it rides him down till it destroys him. It rides and beats him to death. Now what happens when you become a Christian? You’re out of that realm of demand. Grace is reigning. How much? As much as sin used to reign. Don’t you like having grace riding on your back, you know, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Grace is reigning over you; working in you, keeping you from going astray, causing you to turn toward God. The realm of supply.

So, that’s the realm we live in. God has put His very life in us, and grace is reigning. And the way we bear fruit, according to the Lord Jesus, the way you bear fruit is not by looking at the Law. It is by abiding in the Vine. “If you abide in Me, and I abide in you, - what happens? - you’ll bear much fruit.” What is He saying? If He is saying anything, He is saying the way you get fruit is not by rules and externals, it’s by internal life that I have put in you. How are you going to bear fruit? Abide in the Vine. Basically He is saying, “Stay.” The word “abide” just means continue to stay where you are. It’s not saying, Go out and climb the highest mountain. No, stay where you are. Abide.

You know, the Puritans were a group of godly men, and I don’t want to categorize them, but there was a

little bit of a flavor of looking back at the Law. And one of the men actually said, "Moses takes us to Christ to be justified," - that's a tutor right? The Law leads us to Christ, that part is good. And he said, "Christ sends us back to Moses to be sanctified - (now go back and start studying those commandments, you know, I've got this 1,000 page book on the Ten Commandments, and really dig in and try to concentrate on your duty.)" Beloved, Christ does not need to send you anywhere to sanctify you. He doesn't need to send you back to Moses. You look at Christ, that's entirely sufficient. Paul says, "We are gazing at Him," he says, "We are being transformed into the same image, even from glory to glory, by gazing on Christ."

The problem with most of us is we have so little glimpse of Christ. It's not that you don't know enough commandments. The way of growth in the Christian life is not by focusing on Law or on sin. "I've got this problem with sin; I've got to really zero in on that sin and think about it day and night, and really work on it to get out of it." No, you just need a little glimpse of Christ, that stuff goes out the window so quickly. Temptations lose their power when Thou art nigh. Haven't you experienced that? You get a little glimpse of grace; you get a little glimpse of Christ, it's like, "What? I don't want that stuff."

The way of holiness, beloved, is not law; even New Testament law. It's the power of the Spirit. What did we read? The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy and peace and so on. We are not called to produce those things. It's the fruit of the Spirit. We are to be channels; we are to be rightly related and let Him live that. And haven't you experienced that? You get on your knees before God, you get cleansed of your sins, and you think again, you lay hold again of what He has done for you, and all of a sudden the joy is there and the peace is there. It's the Spirit having free course.

Alright, I've spent too long on those, but it's wonderful stuff. We are dead to the Law. There is another way, No. 5: We are free from the Law as a covenant rule of duty. The Law of Moses, we are not under that anymore as a covenant rule of duty. Now that means, you see, when God gave the Law, He gave a unit. It was all these commandments, 613 the rabbis said. All of that was the Law. That is not the covenant we are under anymore. We are in the New Covenant. No longer do you have to bring a lamb or something, when you accidentally touch a lizard carcass. All that stuff, including the Ten Commandments.

Now listen to me carefully here. Again, what did I say? I said, I am not saying murder is right now. I am saying that those things, as a unit, we are not under that anymore. None of it. We are not under those. We are free from it as a covenant rule of duty. Not that the law of Christ, over here in this realm - the New Covenant, not that the law of Christ contradicts any of that. God forbid. It fulfills and surpasses it. Just like I said, which one is higher? You shall not commit adultery, or love your wife as Christ loved the church. You are dealing with something much, much more that takes that in, and goes way beyond it. Never in any sense, in any way, shape or form, is Christ throwing that out. He is taking it way beyond. But nevertheless, our mindset is, "I am not under that anymore, I am over here in this realm. I am looking at what Jesus said, I am looking at what the Apostles said."

Now, there's questions coming up, I hope, in your mind. We are going to talk about them in a little bit. But think of this: Back in the Old Testament, Moses said, (he was prophesying,) God said through Moses, "There is a day coming when I am going to raise up a Prophet like you from among your brethren." Remember that? Towards the end of Moses's life or somewhere in there, He says, "I am going to raise up a Prophet like you from among your brethren. And anyone that doesn't listen to the words of that Prophet will be cut off from among the people." So

now, this great Moses, you know, He says, “I am going to raise up a Prophet like you.”

Let’s look back here, we probably ought to turn to this in Deuteronomy 18:15, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to Him. This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’ And the LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well. I will raise up a Prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which He shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.’”

Now you might say, “Well, that could be talking about any prophet.” But you get over to the end of Deuteronomy 34:10, at the time of Moses’s death, and these are the closing words of Deuteronomy, “Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, for all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, and for all the mighty power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.” It says there hasn’t been anybody like that.

Now let’s turn to Acts chapter 3 verse 22. Peter is preaching here, and verse 22, “Moses said, ‘The LORD God shall raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’” - That was the Jewish branches that were broken off from that olive tree - “And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days. It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘In your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.” So here is this promise again, you see.

But Christ is the Prophet like unto Moses. Did He know God, did He speak to God face-to-face? There is never anybody that spoke to God face-to-face like He did. Did He show the mighty signs and wonders like Moses? Well, He went way beyond anything that Moses did. Christ swallows up and replaces Moses as a Lawgiver; just like He swallows up and replaces Aaron as a Priest; and He swallows up and replaces David as a King.

Is Christ a true Priest? He is the only true Priest that ever lived. Aaron was just doing stuff there with rams and stuff, he wasn’t interceding truly and taking away sin. Aaron was a shadow; Christ is the reality, you see. The only real Priest that ever lived was the Lord Jesus Christ.

Was He a King? Yes, He is the only King who has ever been. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Any other king, David or Solomon or whoever, they were just little shadows; they were weak men.

Now beloved, listen to this: Is Christ a Lawgiver? Yes, He is the only Lawgiver that has ever been. Moses was the shadow. He (Christ) is the One that speaks the very words of God. Now that gives you a little different perspective about the Sermon on the Mount. People say, “Well, all He is doing there is correcting false Jewish ideas about what Moses said.” No, He is not. “You’ve heard this about performing vows; I say to you, ‘Don’t do it at all’” - how is that correcting false ideas? You see. Even, “You have heard you shall not commit adultery; I say to you, ‘Whoever looks on a woman to lust has committed adultery already.’” The Law of Moses was not talking about that. It was talking about a civil nation exercising the death penalty for an actual act of adultery. A judge in Israel had

no way of knowing whether somebody committed adultery in his heart. Now, that doesn't mean it was right back then, in fact, we learn from Job that he wouldn't look on a woman. But the fact is, the Mosaic Law itself was dealing with a civil nation.

Now what do we have? Well, that mount was glorious where God gave that Law, written by the finger of God. But if you have eyes to see, there was something more glorious than that. If I could choose whether I would like to be there at that mount and see that mountain on fire and all that, No. I would rather be at the Sermon on the Mount where God incarnate sat and said, "I say unto you. You have heard this, but I say unto you." What is He doing there? He is telling us deeper things, yes. But what He is doing is, He is giving the laws of His kingdom. And these are laws that could never be given to a civil nation, a physical nation of mostly unregenerate Jews. Most of them were unregenerate, look at the way they lived. But He is giving laws that are for a nation of 100 percent regenerate people who all know the Lord, who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

They are stuff that's absolutely impossible for anyone other than one empowered by the very life of Christ coming from outside themselves and filling them with strength to do it. And these are not legal, you know, 1, 2, 3, 4. They are guideposts. They are saying, if somebody slaps you on one cheek, turn the other also. "Now what does that mean exactly here, you know, I got cheated on the internet and maybe..." You see, He is giving us principles of life that is in a different realm. And the idea of going out here to the world, and saying, "Well, you know, we need to impose the Sermon on the Mount on the world." No, that's nonsense. That's what pacifism says. That's nonsense. The world is not going to live by that standard, it can't.

So then, you got other people come along and say, "We need to impose the Law of Moses on the world." Totally missing the picture. That was giving to a physical nation in a Theonomy, in a Theocracy, where you could go to God and say, "What are we going to do in this situation?" And God says, "He needs to be stoned to death." We don't have that now. That applied to the nation of Israel. That is gone. This (the Sermon on the Mount) applies to a spiritual nation - and that's the church. It doesn't apply to this world, they can't possible live in this. It is a miracle whenever we live in it in any measure, you know, it's incredible.

You remember in Deuteronomy 13, God says, If your dearest friend or the wife of your bosom tries to lead you away to another god, what are you supposed to do? Remember what the penalty is? Anybody? "Stone them to death. Your hand shall be the first. You shall not spare or pity them." So, if you live under the Old Covenant, you don't come in and share with the prayer minister, "Please pray for my husband, he's become a Jehovah's Witness." You don't do that. The commandment of God was to stone him to death; and you were to be the first. You say, "That's a bad law." No, that was a perfect, that was a wonderful law, for the situation into which it was given; because He's dealing, He's restraining, He's teaching, He's taking these people that are in this infancy stage and childhood stage, and He's got them under a strict tutor, for their own good. And what did He say? "Then they will all hear and nobody would ever do this thing again."

You see, He's restraining them through the Law; He's trying to teach them basic principles of right and wrong and truth, to preserve some remnant of understanding until the Messiah would come. But we are in a different realm now. It's an amazing thing. We are not in that realm where we stone to death our husband or our wife. We are in the realm where we come and share at a prayer meeting and we start praying for them. Amazing.

Beloved, Christianity is made to flourish in a pluralistic society where people beat us up! It's not magiste-

rial - "We're going to beat these, we're going to kill these homosexuals, we're going to do this," - that's not the way it is at all. We are in a realm now, where the blessing - God teaches Abraham, He blesses him with all these physical blessings to let us know that He'll bless those who serve God, and He still does it today in many ways. But by the time you come to Christianity, He is wanting you to grow up enough that you realize that somebody like the apostle Paul may not have anywhere to lay his head. And he says, "Often sleepless and hungry." And He wants us to grow up enough to realize that God's blessing is resting on that man mightily. You see how much more mature? Paul says in Galatians 3 moving into Galatians 4, he says, "You're sons now. You are no longer under that schoolmaster. You've got the Spirit of adoption, you are full grown sons."

My oldest son is in his 30s now. I don't have a list for him, I don't tell him anymore, "You gotta tie your shoe strand," and call him in the morning, "Put your shoes on. And you've got to brush your teeth, did you remember to brush your teeth? Don't put your gum under the table."

What is it? Much much fewer rules and regulations, much much greater responsibility. Our responsibility, beloved, is so big we can't comprehend it. He has opened the doors up. He says, "I take all those laws off of you. Now be like Me." It's unbelievable. We are free. Paul says, "You are free from the Law." It's amazing, he's dealing with the Corinthians, talking about immorality, he could so easily quote the Old [Testament], "The Bible says in the Law of Moses, 'You shall not commit adultery.'" What is he doing? He is dealing with Corinthians - the most immoral culture around. And he starts talking to them about, he says, "You are the temple of the Holy Spirit." Totally different way of approaching everything.

You see, the Law of Christ surpasses the Law of Moses as much as sonship surpasses slavery. That's how much it is. The Law of Moses restrain and constrain a civil, physical nation of mostly unregenerate people; held them in check for their own good. It was perfect for the setting in which it was given. But we are in a realm now that is unbelievable in terms of the liberty and the responsibility that we have been given. So Jesus is saying things like, "They hit you on one cheek, turn the other one. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' I say this reaches right down into your thought life. Deal radically with it. You have heard you shall not murder, He says, 'I tell you, if you've got hatred in your heart, you are a murderer already.'" And John says in 1 John, "We know that no murderer has eternal life."

You don't stand and tell a group of Christians, "You know, we Christians ought not to hate each other the way we do." If you hate people, you're not a Christian. "We know that we've passed from death to life because we love the brethren." That's that law written on the heart.

Now, I am almost done here. "Well, after what I just heard him say, I am going to take this," and I'll try to get the right spot, "this big part of the Bible, I'm just going to throw that out. We are in the New Covenant now." No, that's exactly wrong, isn't it? Well, the differences between, (we call this the Old Testament,) but beloved the Old Covenant is a different thing than that first part of our Bible. We are not under the Old Covenant, but this whole first part of our Bible is still the Word of God to us. It is still absolutely authoritative. And Jesus said, "Not one stroke, not one dot, not one jot or tittle, not one iota will pass away until all is accomplished. It's the Word of God. He says in Timothy, he says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and so on," and he says, "that the man of God might be adequate..." He is talking about the Old Testament. The New Testament had not been written yet. You see, the big things about God and His character have never changed in the least. And all of this is the Word of God to

us.

Now let's turn to a very important passage. Are you still with me, are you hanging on here? Faint yet pursuing. Matthew 5. I promise the last message won't be quite this long. Matthew 5:17, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets." Now you might have gotten that impression if you saw some of the stuff He did. He touched lepers. That was unlawful. His disciples eat grain on the Sabbath day, they said, "Why are you letting them do what is not lawful?" He didn't say, "Well, it is lawful, you just don't understand the Law." He says, "Well, don't you realize David did what was unlawful. And the priests, on the Sabbath, do what's unlawful in order to honor the Temple." He says, "Something greater than the Temple is here. If my disciples are serving Me, they can break the Sabbath." Isn't that incredible? "I am the Lord of the Sabbath."

Well, they could have gotten the idea that He had come to abolish. I mean, "A woman caught in adultery, Moses said, 'Stone her.' What do You say?" They could have gotten the idea. And He wants to make it clear, "I did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law until all is accomplished." Now, here is the problem: Verse 19, "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so, teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Now He is talking about the Old Testament here, the Old Covenant, the Law of Moses. And He makes a conclusion, "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments..."

Look, every part of this Law was perfect; if you annul one of the least of those, you're going to be least in the kingdom of heaven. Now what are we going to do with this?

Let's turn back to Deuteronomy 22, we'll try to read some of these least commandments. Deuteronomy 22:9, "You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest all the produce of the seed which you have sown and the increase of the vineyard become defiled. You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together (mixed garment)."

Now I won't do it, but I could probably go around to a bunch of you, probably on me too, and you look, "Ooh ooh. So and so percent this; so and so percent that." Whoever annuls one of the least of these commandments and teaches others, is least in the kingdom of heaven. A bunch of you guys are least in the kingdom. What does He mean? Well, we have it in that verse right before it, don't we? "Whoever plows with an ox and a donkey together." How does a Christian keep that? Have you ever heard that before?

Let's look at how Paul interprets it. , "Do not be bound together with unbelievers." Now the problem is, you miss what's actually being quoted. Literally, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers." What's that talking about? That's talking about a verse that says, "Don't put an oxen and a donkey together."

What is Paul doing? He is saying, as a Christian, you don't yoke up, (a clean beast and an unclean beast,) you are a Christian, you are clean, you don't yoke up with an unclean. Okay? You see this? Christians keep this verse in a much deeper way than the Jews ever kept it. We don't say, "Ah, that doesn't matter, I'll just go join somebody unclean if I want to."

"If you annul one of the least of these commandments." He is saying, "Everything there reveals something about God." Now we may not understand all of them, but think of this: A lot of them, we are fulfilling all the time. For example, things about offering sacrifices for sins, and things about the lamb taking away the sin and all that; all

that is fulfilled when you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You've kept all those commandments in principle. You see, you are not under any of them as covenant law, but you are fulfilling them as you walk and follow Christ.

Let me give you another one. In other words, no Christian takes a high-handed view towards the Old Testament. We thank God for every jot and tittle. And you study it, and dig into it, and memorize it, and look at it. But what? You've got to realize the whole thing is about Jesus. If you miss that, you've missed the whole thing. He goes through, He says, "You search the Scriptures because you think that you have in them eternal life; it's they that testify of Me." And as you come to the Old Testament as a Christian, you find all kinds of references to the Lord Jesus Christ. I mean, everything, from that scarlet thread that Rahab had, you know, "When we see that piece of red, you'll be spared. You won't die." All kinds of things like that.

But let's look at another one. Deuteronomy 25 verse 4, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing." Now, that still applies; I mean, you've got to be kind to your animal. They are saying that they are hungry, they are wanting to stop and get a bite or something, you don't keep driving them. You let them stop and eat something that you're threshing. How does that apply? How do we keep that least commandment? Well, Paul talks about this in the very place, , let's turn to this, this is important; and with this I close, I promise.

, "Do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?" - Now look, he is appealing to the Law. This same guy that said we are not under the Law, he is appealing to it as having divine authority. He says this isn't just a man speaking, God said this. It has divine authority, but it has no authority whatsoever as covenant law over me. It's the principle of what God was saying that is still binding upon me. And listen to what he says - "Does not the Law also say these things? For it is written in the Law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.' God is not concerned about oxen, is He?" Well, yes He is, in a sense. But he is saying, He has so much more to say than that, that it pales to insignificance. "Is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written." That means when God gave that, back there, hundreds of years before, and it was written down, it was written down for us. Amazing!

"For our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much that we should reap material things from you?" So here he is, he says he appeals to a commandment from the Law; and he says the real reason behind this was not even those oxen, even though God does care about oxen. But compared to us, upon whom the ends of the ages have come, that's the reason God gave this thing. And we fulfill these laws and these commandments.

He says, what's the attitude a Christian ought to be towards the Old Testament? It ought to be His attitude, which is, this is the very Word of God. Not one jot or tittle shall fail from it. I want to go back there and learn everything I can about Jesus. But you've got to be careful that you don't take your interpretation of it and put it on other Christians' consciences, unless it's something that the New Testament does.

Now you can go back and learn many profitable applications from a lot of things. I mean, that manna, you know, that manna; Jesus says, "I am the true bread that came down out of heaven." "You mean that's talking about Christ?" Yeah, He said, "You're not going to be able to store any of this up from one day to the next. Every day you've got to get a fresh supply. It will stink if you try to keep it over. And gather it morning by morning." All

those things, you know, they are teaching us things. But you can't take this, if you don't have anything in the New Testament to prove that what you are saying is right, then you've got to be careful whether you can have it before God and you ask Him to teach you more, and so on. But there's a lot of things that we do have - Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us. Okay, go back and read about the Passover. "This shall be the beginning of days for you. When I see the blood, I'll pass over you." Not when I see how you're feeling inside the house. "When I see that blood, I'll pass over you." All of those things we can learn.

You see, this whole thing (the OT) is still the Word of God to us, but we are not under any of it. And if anybody tries to take any one of those commandments and put them on you, and say, "You have to fulfill that commandment as a commandment back there," that is a mistake. And in general, Paul says "Those things are shadows of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." That is the way we approach all this. Amen.